United Nations A/C.1/56/PV.4

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-sixth session

First Committee

4th meeting

Tuesday, 9 October 2001, 3 p.m.

New York

Chairman: Mr. Erdös ..... (Hungary)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 64 to 84 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security items

Mr. Swe (Myanmar): I have the honour and privilege to take the floor on behalf of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), namely, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam and my own delegation, Myanmar.

Allow me, first of all, to begin by congratulating you, Mr. Chairman, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. My congratulations also go to the members of the Bureau. We ASEAN representatives are fully confident that, under your able leadership, our deliberations will bear fruitful results. At the same time, I should like to assure you of our full cooperation and support. I also wish to express our appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala for his comprehensive and important statement.

ASEAN countries would like to express our condolences and sympathies to the families of the victims of the senseless terrorist attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001. The recent tragic events of 11 September are a wake-up call for all of us regarding the danger posed by terrorism, including nuclear terrorism. We welcome the prompt actions taken by the United Nations, and take note of the resolutions adopted recently by the General Assembly and the Security Council of the United Nations in this regard. We note with concern the close connection between international terrorism, illegal trafficking in arms and illegal movement of nuclear, chemical, biological and other deadly materials. We hope that we will bear in mind the dangers of international terrorism in the deliberations of the First Committee.

Last year, we ASEAN countries welcomed the successful outcome of the United Nations Millennium Summit, which was held in New York. The Millennium Declaration, adopted by the Summit, is of utmost importance and reflects the commitments by our heads of State and Government. During this session we should focus our efforts on making those commitments a reality.

ASEAN countries would like to reiterate that we view the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons as a very important contribution to the international community's efforts towards peace and security.

ASEAN countries recognize that, in view of recent political developments, there now exist conditions for the establishment of a world free of nuclear weapons. ASEAN countries also reaffirm the unanimous conclusion of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 8 July 1996, that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

01-57041 (E)

disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. In that regard, we the ASEAN countries have co-sponsored the resolution introduced by Malaysia in support of that important ruling, and we will continue to do so.

For a number of years, ASEAN countries have co-sponsored the resolution initiated by Myanmar urging the nuclear-weapon States to stop immediately the qualitative improvement, development, production and stockpiling of nuclear warheads and their delivery systems. The resolution urges the nuclear-weapon States, as an interim measure, to de-alert and deactivate immediately their nuclear weapons and to take other concrete measures to further reduce the operational status of their nuclear-weapon systems. It also calls for the convening of an international conference on nuclear disarmament in all its aspects, at an early date, to identify and deal with concrete measures of nuclear disarmament.

Those two resolutions are part of ASEAN members' contributions to the cause of disarmament. This year, Malaysia and Myanmar, with the support of ASEAN and other co-sponsors, will once again introduce those resolutions. It is our hope that the resolutions will enjoy broader support and increased co-sponsorship.

At the same time, I would like to inform delegations that ASEAN countries also successfully introduced a working paper on nuclear disarmament at the 2001 session of the Disarmament Commission. The proposals contained in the ASEAN working paper, which underscore the elements of the resolutions I have just mentioned, were clearly reflected in the paper prepared by the Chairman of the Working Group on nuclear disarmament. Through such efforts, ASEAN countries will work hard to enhance the momentum on the process of nuclear disarmament.

The ASEAN countries have consistently stressed the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We reiterate our call on the nuclear-weapon States to make further efforts towards the elimination of all nuclear weapons.

In that context, we look forward to the convening of the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which is to take place in New York, and we call on all States signatories to support the objectives of the Conference. We are encouraged that three nuclear-weapon States have ratified that important treaty. We also urge all States, particularly the remaining nuclear-weapon States, to ratify the CTBT as soon as possible.

Last year we were able to bring about a positive outcome of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The ASEAN countries particularly welcome the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament, to which all States parties are committed under article VI of the Treaty. We reiterate our view that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. We therefore call again for the full and effective implementation of the steps set out in the Final Document of the Review Conference. In that connection, we reaffirm our conviction that there exists an urgent need for the nuclear-weapon States to take concrete measures to fulfil their obligations under the NPT, in particular its article VI on nuclear disarmament and its article IV on providing technical assistance to non-nuclear-weapon States in the application of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

ASEAN countries note the recent dialogue among the major Powers and other concerned States on the issue of national missile defence; we have expressed our hope that such dialogue will narrow the differences and bring about new constructive approaches to address the issues related to that issue in the interest of maintaining world security and stability. ASEAN members welcome the commitment made by States parties to the NPT at the 2000 NPT Review Conference to preserving and strengthening the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty) as a cornerstone of strategic stability.

We share the view that there is an urgent need for a comprehensive, balanced and non-discriminatory approach to missiles, as a contribution to international peace and security. We note that a Panel of Governmental Experts has been established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 55/33 A to consider the issue of missiles in all its aspects. We continue to believe that concerns related to missile proliferation are best addressed through multilaterally negotiated, universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory agreements.

We note that a summit between the President of the Russian Federation and the President of the United States will take place in the near future. We continue to hope that early entry into force of the Treaty between the Russian Federation and the United States of America on the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START II) will become a reality, and we look forward to its full implementation and to the early commencement of START III negotiations.

ASEAN wishes to recall that the 34th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting noted the progress that has been made in the negotiation of a draft protocol on the verification of the Bacteriological Weapons Convention, and looks forward to the fifth review of the Convention, to take place in November 2001. However, ASEAN notes with regret the lack of consensus at the twenty-fourth session of the Ad Hoc Group of States Parties to the Convention on the draft composite text of a Biological Weapons Convention protocol. ASEAN also regrets that the Group could not adopt a final report on its work. ASEAN emphasizes the validity of the mandate that was given to the Ad Hoc Group and stresses that the only sustainable method for strengthening the Convention is through multilateral negotiations aimed at concluding a non-discriminatory legally binding agreement.

We also urge all States, which have neither ratified nor acceded to the Chemical Weapons Convention to do so at the earliest possible date.

ASEAN countries note the outcome of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in New York, and we express our hope that the Programme of Action adopted at the Conference will be implemented effectively. At the same time, we regret that the Conference failed to achieve agreement on two core issues relating to the problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons: strict control over private ownership of small arms; and prevention of the supply of small arms to non-State groups. In that connection, we join the Secretary-General's call on Member States to redouble their efforts towards a ban on supplying small arms to non-State actors. The Programme of Action that emerged from the Conference is a first step in the right direction. We look forward to the review conference to take stock of progress made and to consider further and more effective measures to combat illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

We strongly believe that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones under the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba constitute positive steps towards attaining the objective of global nuclear disarmament. In that regard, we welcome the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the regions concerned.

The ASEAN countries, through sustained efforts, have successfully established a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia. The Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone entered into force on 27 March 1997. A Protocol is annexed to the Treaty for accession by nuclear-weapon States. In welcoming the announcement by China, at the ASEAN post-ministerial conference in July 1999, of its readiness to accede to the Protocol, we wish to reiterate our call to nuclear-weapon States to accede to the Protocol as soon as possible.

We welcome the progress in the implementation of the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty and stress the importance of direct consultations between ASEAN and the five nuclear-weapon States. We consider this to constitute significant progress towards encouraging accession by the nuclear-weapon States to the Protocol to the Treaty. In that connection, we welcome the first direct consultation between ASEAN and the nuclear-weapon States, which took place at Hanoi on 19 May 2001, and we reaffirm our support for that process. We call for continued consultations with the nuclear-weapon States. We also welcome the regional workshop sponsored by the Treaty and by the International Atomic Energy Agency on a strategic plan for radiation safety, held in Bangkok on 11 August 2001.

The ASEAN countries reiterate once again our support for the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV). We reiterate our deep concern over the lack of consensus in the deliberations held by the Disarmament Commission in 1999 on its agenda and objectives. We continue to call for further steps leading to the convening of the fourth special session, with the participation of all States Members of the United Nations, and we stress the need for SSOD IV to review

and assess the implementation of SSOD I while reaffirming its principles and priorities.

The ASEAN countries continue to attach special importance to confidence-building efforts among the countries in the region. ASEAN has been steadfastly undertaking concrete measures to enhance regional security through various initiatives at the ASEAN Regional Forum.

We note the positive developments that have taken place in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) process through various activities. We are encouraged that the ARF has adopted three papers, namely the Paper on Concepts and Principles of Preventive Diplomacy, the Terms of Reference for the ARF Experts/Eminent Persons Register, and the Paper on the Enhanced Role of the ARF Chair. This marks a significant achievement for the ARF process.

We also note with satisfaction the progress made in the implementation of the overlapping measures between confidence-building measures and preventive diplomacy. Over the past few years numerous discussions and talks have been held to enhance mutual understanding among nations and promote peace, stability and prosperity in the region. In this regard, we appreciate the activities undertaken by the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, as Chairman of the ARF, through formal and informal contacts with ARF participants as well as regional and international organizations, particularly the United Nations, the Organization of American States, and the Non-Aligned Movement. We will continue our strong support for the activities of the ARF, its Intersessional Support Group on Confidence-Building Measures, and the convening of the ARF Experts' Group Meeting on Transnational Crime, particularly in examining transnational crimes of concern to the region.

We reaffirm the importance of the Conference on Disarmament as the single multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament. We are greatly dismayed at the continued impasse in the Conference on Disarmament. It is our hope that the States concerned will demonstrate their commitment to the process of disarmament and exercise the political will to overcome this deadlock and reach an amicable solution in the near future. The ASEAN countries believe that the expansion of the Conference on Disarmament is necessary, and we fully endorse the application of Thailand and the Philippines.

We believe that the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament is an urgent priority. We therefore call for the immediate commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices, under the aegis of the Special Coordinator.

Once again, we would like to express our appreciation to the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Africa for their effective contributions to international peace and security. The regional seminars and forums organized by these centres effectively contribute to the progress of the ongoing security and disarmament process in their respective regions.

It is now more urgent than ever for us, the international community, to strive for international peace and security, to redouble our efforts and to live up to our commitment to the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. We ASEAN countries once again confirm our commitment to work cooperatively to achieve these goals as a matter of utmost priority.

Mr. Rivero (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. Chairman, allow me to congratulate you on your election, and I extend my congratulations to all of the other members of the Bureau as well.

I cannot begin my statement without first offering some thoughts on the significance of the work of this Committee in the light of the horrific acts perpetrated against this city on 11 September.

For the first time in history, we witnessed the commission of one of the worst acts ever of insane contempt for human life. The perpetrators used innocent passengers to crash aircraft into buildings, so as to take the largest possible number of human lives.

Peru has put an end to terrorism, but not before losing more than 25,000 human lives and incurring billions of dollars in property damage. We therefore feel as if it were our own the pain, helplessness and outrage experienced by a nation when it is attacked in such an infamous manner by a faceless enemy. We extend our solidarity to the people of the United States and wish them strength and wisdom during these trying times.

This year my country participated actively in the efforts of the United Nations to concretize, in the form of a document, the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Indeed, this type of weapon was used for over a decade by the terrorist movements that sowed death and destruction in my country.

With this Programme of Action, we have at last before us a unique opportunity effectively to combat day-to-day violence and the kind of terrorism that has become globalized, knows no borders and jeopardizes the fundamental freedoms of human beings.

Another major aspect I wish to highlight is that our country is fully committed to the objectives embodied in the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. I am pleased to inform the Committee that on 13 September, Peru completed the destruction of 321,368 anti-personnel mines, which represented Peru's stockpile of these devices.

This process of destruction has relied on the support and verification of the representatives of the international community, the United Nations, the Organization Of American States, the International Committee of the Red Cross and civil society. We have thus complied with article 4 of the Ottawa Convention one year ahead of the expiration of the mandatory four-year period established by that agreement.

Peru acknowledges the basic role of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, to which every year the States voluntarily report their imports and exports. Peru has submitted to the Secretary-General, for the first time in more than six years, the report on its military expenditures.

My delegation is firmly convinced that the restriction of weapons and disarmament in all the regions of the world are the only way to achieve an effective culture of conflict prevention. In this sense, I wish to refer to a subject of vital importance in the new foreign policy of my country.

In his speech to the Congress of the Republic on the day he assumed the presidency of Peru, President Alejandro Toledo proposed the limitation of military expenditures in South America in order to use those resources in the struggle against poverty. That is entirely logical, as South America is the Latin American region that spends the most on weaponry. In past decades, it was the locus of an arms race between its military Governments. Today, democracy prevails in South America. Democratic Governments do not create conflicts. The only conflicts they may have are the internal conflicts arising from poverty, which is vigorously present in South America.

The subregion has the highest rates of social inequality in the world. More than 40 per cent of its population lives on two or three dollars a day, according to the *Human Development Reports*. How, then, can democratic Governments continue to spend on weapons in these circumstances? And even more, how can they do so in the world's current worrying economic situation? This is all the more true since border disputes have nearly disappeared and been replaced by the Common Market of the South and Andean integration processes.

That is why we fully agreed with the Chilean representative when, on behalf of the countries of the Rio Group, he stated the firm conviction that measures should be adopted that will contribute to an effective and gradual limitation and monitoring of defence costs in the region, ultimately ensuring the availability of more resources for the social and economic development of our peoples. Our intention is therefore to pursue the proposal to limit weapons in South America in order to be able to devote these resources to improving the deplorable standard of living prevalent in most of the subregion. As a starting point, we have undertaken an exercise of weapons equivalence and transparency with Chile. We hope that this process will be extended to the other South American countries.

I conclude my speech by reasserting the role which Peru believes the Disarmament Commission has to play as the appropriate forum for dialogue and open debate on this subject. We pledge here and now to offer our total cooperation in and support for the work that we must perform during this year.

Mr. Reyes (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your well-deserved election to lead the work of the First Committee at this session of the General Assembly. We also thank your predecessor and the members of last year's Bureau for their excellent work. We are convinced that you, Ambassador Erdös, given your wide experience in

matters of disarmament and international security, will preside over our sessions with wisdom and even-handedness. To that end, you can rely on an excellent Bureau, all members of which deserve our fullest vote of confidence.

Colombia endorses the statement made by Ambassador Valdés, Permanent Representative of Chile, on behalf of the countries members of the Rio Group. In my statement, however, I wish to specify and expand on our national position on various items on the Committee's agenda that are of particular interest to our country.

We fully agree that the barbarism and magnitude of the acts of international terrorism carried out in this city and elsewhere in the United States on 11 September make it necessary to strengthen international security. Although this issue has been addressed by the Sixth Committee in recent years and in plenary meeting by the General Assembly over the past two weeks, Colombia believes that the First Committee must make a major contribution to eliminating this problem, which has become the most serious threat to peace and security today.

Above and beyond the ratification and implementation of the 12 conventions on this issue by all the States Members of our Organization, and of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) to prevent and suppress the financing of acts of international terrorism, which Colombia supported in its capacity as a member of the Security Council, this Committee must make an important contribution to preventing, combating and eliminating terrorist acts.

The scope of the terrorist assaults upon the people and Government of the United States, to whom we have expressed our deepest condolences and sense of solidarity, highlights the alarming possibility that such mass destruction may be repeated anywhere in the world. This gives added importance to such items on our agenda as the Biological Weapons Convention; the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

We must echo the appeal for universal accession to these Conventions, for the explicit prohibition of the use of these weapons of mass destruction, for the restriction of the development of new technologies for such weaponry and, of course, for ensuring that existing chemical and bacteriological weapons do not fall into the hands of terrorists. The best guarantee of this is their total elimination. The countries that possess chemical weapons must proceed to destroy them, in compliance with the relevant Convention, and submit detailed plans on that process of destruction. We must also move forward in the inclusion of other weaponry in the scope of application of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and in the adoption of new protocols in this area. As to the Biological Weapons Convention, we continue to hope that the Ad Hoc Group will reach agreement on the verification protocol.

Progress on the issue of weapons of mass destruction has not been satisfactory, nor has it been satisfactory in the area of the most archetypal weapon of mass destruction, nuclear weapons. Not all of the international community has acceded yet to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation. of Nuclear Weapons or the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which are fundamental for progress in nuclear disarmament. It is now more crucial than ever that the international community, as a whole, shoulder its responsibilities towards these treaties.

Colombia reaffirms its conviction that the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems is the best way to achieve international peace and security. We reject obsolete doctrines such as that of deterrence, and innovative but dangerous concepts, such as strategic alliances, since they are based on force or the threat of the use of force. We still believe that general and complete disarmament under effective international control is not utopian but, rather, a necessity that is increasingly indispensable in the face of the new challenges to peace and international security.

That is why we are particularly concerned that the Conference on Disarmament, a forum essential to negotiation, has not managed to reach agreement on a programme of work. It is an alarming sign that after three years of paralysis, the Conference has not been able to work on the issues that all of us consider to be essential and a priority for international security. Only by means of decision 1646 was it possible to continue with efforts that should avoid a further deterioration of an organ of vital importance for everyone.

Two items on the First Committee's agenda are fundamental for Colombia because of the domestic conflict our country is going through. These are the implementation of the Convention on anti-personnel

mines and the issue of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. In both these areas, we are pleased to report fundamental progress, although, no doubt, there is still a long way to go.

The third meeting of the States parties to the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on their Destruction, held in Managua last month, resulted in a significant reduction in the quantity of anti-personnel mines exported and in the number of countries that produce them. The meeting led to a significant increase in the quantity of mines destroyed and a considerable reduction in the number of victims. However, we urgently need universal accession to the Convention among those countries that produce the greatest number of mines of this kind.

Colombia had the honour of presiding over the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in this city this past July. As the President of the Conference, I can testify firsthand to the level of commitment and responsibility demonstrated by all delegations in order to adopt the Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. I was also a witness to the flexibility and dedication of several delegations so that this could be achieved.

Fundamental to this achievement was the work of the Preparatory Commission of the Conference and of some of the Conference's Vice-Presidents, who helped facilitate the consensus, such as Ambassador Dos Santos of Mozambique, Ambassador Weston of the United Kingdom and Ambassador Sood of India. Ambassador Donowaki of Japan also deserves special recognition; he presided over the high-level segment and has devoted many years of his successful diplomatic career to an issue of such great importance for the world, and in particular, for countries, such as Colombia, that are victims of this scourge. The Secretariat and, specifically, Mr. Dhanapala and his team of collaborators in the Department of Disarmament Affairs also played a fundamental role in the Conference's success. As President, it is my duty to mention and thank them on behalf of myself and all delegations.

The Programme of Action approved by our Conference recognized the global dimensions of the problem and gave it the necessary priority on the international agenda. As well, the Programme of Action provided a roadmap to follow and it identified the route that States, civil society and the international community must follow to achieve the goal we have set for ourselves.

Now we must make progress on the full implementation of the measures adopted by the Programme of Action on the national, regional and global level, and make progress in the areas of international cooperation, the assistance States will require to implement these measures, and follow-up to the Conference.

My delegation, together with the delegations of South Africa and Japan, has decided to propose for the consideration of this forum a draft resolution on the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons, by means of which we not only seek to add the political support of the General Assembly to the Programme of Action – which was approved by consensus during the Conference held last July — but also to start work on the Programme's development and multilateral implementation.

The draft resolution was formulated using language of consensus originating in the Programme of Action itself or in the most important resolutions on the issue from recent years. The proposal, the details of which I will have the opportunity to explain in detail during the meetings of the cosponsors scheduled for this week, envisages, inter alia, the convening of a review conference and biennial meetings. It calls on States, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and civil society to start taking the necessary measures to implement the Programme of Action. It invites them, in concert with the Secretary-General, to mobilize the resources and capabilities necessary to advance the Programme and to assist those States requiring assistance in the process of national implementation.

Allow me to conclude by reiterating the appeal I made at the beginning of Colombia's intervention in the general debate of the First Committee of the General Assembly of the United Nations. We must take advantage of the consensus that currently exists in the United Nations on the total rejection of international terrorism in order to make progress on the issues of disarmament and non-proliferation, so that we can prevent the terrorists from gaining access to weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Ahsan (Bangladesh): Mr. Chairman, let me begin by congratulating you on your unanimous election to preside over our deliberations. We are confident that under your guidance we will be able to successfully conclude our deliberations in the Committee. Our felicitations also go to the other members of the Bureau. We also thank Under-Secretary-General Jayantha Dhanapala for his comprehensive statement on key issues facing the Committee this year.

We are participating in this year's general debate at a time when concerns about international security have come to occupy our minds as never before. The tragic events of last month in our host city reverberated around the world because of their devastating impact on the lives of thousands of innocent civilians and property. We reiterate here our deepest condolences for the victims and sympathy for the bereaved families.

In the aftermath of this incident, a strong awareness of the need for international cooperation has been generated among nations. Perhaps one could envisage a positive spin-off from this for cooperation in critical areas of disarmament. A quick look at the developments or lack of them over the past year would confirm that there is dire need for such cooperation.

According to the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, a persistent rise in global military expenditure, continued uncertainty in the strategic relationship between the leading nuclear-weapon Powers and a lingering divergence of views among States on priorities and perspectives block further movement on global security and disarmament.

Looking back at the past year, we are disappointed at the lack of progress that we expected in a number of areas. The ratification of the START II Treaty by Russia was a key development towards deeper cuts in strategic arms. The adoption of an action plan at the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), with an unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, and the adoption of the Programme of Action by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in July were also encouraging developments. The entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the landmine Treaty have created a favourable climate for further progress in the past few years. In some ways, the 2000 NPT Review Conference did break new ground. Clear commitments were made. Specific unilateral, bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral measures have been identified within a comprehensive framework.

We have not seen the continuing wrangle on the programme of work diminish in the Conference on Disarmament, however. Efforts in the Conference on Disarmament to establish an appropriate subsidiary body to deal with nuclear disarmament remain blocked. We believe that negotiation on a broad base is essential to achieve the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, and the Conference on Disarmament still remains the most appropriate forum for that purpose. Although not accompanied by a time frame, we consider the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States with regard to the abolition of their nuclear arsenals, made during the 2000 NPT Review Conference, to be vitally important; it must be give effect through an accelerated process of negotiation.

The Review Conference also referred to the need for prompt negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. We believe that a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons would strengthen the legitimacy of the NPT and facilitate strategic arms reduction by halting the production of new fissile material.

Global strategic balance and stability remain a primordial concern for us. We are convinced that the role of the Treaty on anti-ballistic missile systems should be preserved to ensure the progressive development of the entire disarmament process. The implications of doing otherwise are enormous; that would be seriously destabilizing to the implementation and verification of strategic offensive nuclear arms treaties and to existing moratoriums on test explosions.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has been the centrepiece of the international disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. Soon after its adoption by the General Assembly in 1996, Bangladesh signed the treaty, and we ratified it in March last year. In accordance with the long-standing position of the Non-Aligned Movement, Bangladesh seeks a zero-yield, universal and effectively verifiable test-ban Treaty in order to realize the principles and objectives set for nuclear non-proliferation. We

consider the entry into force of the CTBT to be critical for preventing the development of new types of nuclear warheads and, hence, fundamental to the long-term viability of the NPT.

As a least developed country, Bangladesh reiterates its serious concern about the financial obligations that devolve on the States parties in connection with the implementation of the Treaty, including the expenses of the Preparatory Commission, the CTBT Organization and the verification regime, including the International Monitoring System and the Technical Secretariat. Some burden-sharing mechanism must be evolved to take care of this concern.

As a party to both the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention, Bangladesh is fully aware of its obligations and takes them seriously. Not having acquired or developed any such weapons, we are fully in conformity with the provisions of those two Conventions. We emphasize the need for universal adherence to those Conventions by all States, including the major weapons countries.

Given the changing nature of conflict and violence, the relative importance of small arms and light weapons in sustaining and aggravating conflict has increased greatly. At the same time, their illicit manufacture, trafficking and transfer outside State control makes the problem of small arms a legitimate concern, transcending the bounds of national security and becoming an issue related to regional and international security. In the first ever Programme of Action on this problem, adopted in July this year by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, clear commitments were made by the participating States, with steps to be taken at the national, regional and global levels. We should not falter now in making good on those commitments.

Before I conclude, I would like to underline the importance of two issues. The first is regional disarmament. Unresolved problems in various regions, including our own, continue to stall progress in this area. We believe that confidence-building measures can truly help unblock the process. At the same time, we firmly hold the view that meaningful regional disarmament will depend to a large extent on understanding at the global level and firm steps taken by major Powers.

In this connection, we would like to stress the importance of United Nations regional centres for peace and disarmament, including the one for Asia and the Pacific in Kathmandu. We note with satisfaction the activities of this Centre over the past year, and share the Secretary-General's belief that the mandate of the Centre remains valid and that it could be a useful instrument for fostering a climate of cooperation and disarmament in the region. At the same time, we firmly believe that the best way for the centre to do that would be for it to operate from Kathmandu. We note the outcome of the consultation by the Secretariat in this regard, in particular the readiness of the Government of Nepal to bear the annual operational costs once the Centre has been physically moved to Kathmandu. We call for early completion of the remaining tasks in order for the Centre to be relocated to Kathmandu.

In the context of persistent reliance on the security role of nuclear weapons and the deterrence they are believed to provide, there is a risk that the steps contained in the action plan adopted at the 2000 NPT Review Conference will remain an indication of good intentions without becoming firm commitments. Here, I would like to stress the important role that civil society, including non-governmental organizations, can play in sensitizing public opinion and policy makers in relevant countries. We continue to support their role in advancing the cause of general and complete disarmament.

For Bangladesh, the commitment to the goal of general and complete disarmament flows from our constitutional obligation. Of most practical relevance for us is the irrefutable reality of the relationship between disarmament and development. In view of declining levels of official development assistance, the context of reducing military expenditure in favour of a development budget assumes renewed importance. The noble objective of disarmament — that of saving humanity from the scourge of war and destruction — inspires us in our war against poverty and underdevelopment. Small cuts in military expenditure by major Powers can mean substantive assistance to our development efforts. We believe that our common endeavour should be to continue towards achieving this objective.

Mr. Paolillo (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of this Committee. We would also like extend our congratulations to the other

members of the Bureau, who will be working side by side with you.

Uruguay would like to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Chile, who spoke on behalf of the Rio Group and dealt with a number of issues on our agenda at this session. Without prejudice to that statement or to the statements that we will be making during this structured debate in our capacity as holders of the current chairmanship of the Common Market of the Southern Cone (MERCOSUR), we would like to set out some ideas on issues of interest to Uruguay.

The terrorist attacks against the United States on 11 September, although not perpetrated with weapons included on our agenda, demonstrate the enormous danger of maintaining arsenals of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. More than ever before, we must now define a policy and adopt effective measures to eradicate any chance of illicit access to such weapons, the possibility of which is an extremely grave threat to a civilian population that is increasingly exposed to acts of indiscriminate violence.

The international community must step up its cooperation to ensure the strict monitoring of nuclear material, while improving its capability to intercept illicit trafficking thereof. Our efforts must be four-pronged: first, to prevent nuclear facilities and materials from being used for illegitimate purposes; secondly, to control and strictly monitor nuclear residues and to prevent their diversion for other purposes; thirdly, to explore new technologies to forestall nuclear reactor accidents; and fourthly, to improve all security measures relating to the international transport of radioactive materials.

At a time when all efforts to eliminate the nuclear threat are welcome, we cannot but express our total agreement with Secretary-General Kofi Annan as to the need to identify means of achieving nuclear disarmament as soon as possible. We continue to deem unacceptable the reasons put forward by some States to justify their non-ratification of major treaties dealing with non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament or nuclear reduction.

Uruguay once again emphasized the importance of multilateralism, and of the United Nations as the indispensable forum, for coming to grips with the new challenges entailed in international security. The Conference on Disarmament needs to transform itself into a new platform for constructive discussions that will take multilateral disarmament out of its state of current paralysis. We continue to build our hopes on the results of the work of the Preparatory Committee for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Review Conference to be held next year. We hope that it will indeed make the progress that all of us yearn for.

The zone of peace set up by the Southern Common Market, the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which established the first nuclear-weapon-free zone, and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to which Uruguay is also party, constitute a legal shield that guarantees countries that do not possess nuclear weapons a certain margin of security. But for this system of security to be truly effective, it must achieve a universality that it still does not have, because a number of States are reluctant to become parties. We must step up efforts to expand nuclear-weapon-free zones geographically through the adoption of multilateral, bilateral or unilateral steps, but these efforts will prove useless if they do not go hand in hand with the political determination to comply with commitments entered into. We must seek a way of convincing the States that are still reluctant to join in the endeavour of ridding the world of nuclear weapons that the attainment of that goal will redound to the benefit of their own security and the security of one and all.

Although there is a non-proliferation moratorium, we cannot be content with informal machinery that does not live up to the quest for universal commitment. Uruguay has clearly demonstrated its commitment and identification with the cause of totally eliminating nuclear weapons and other particularly perverse or dangerous weapons. In recent months, the Uruguayan Government has ratified the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Thus, we have swelled the ranks of those countries that have already taken steps to strengthen the legal disarmament regime so laboriously built up over the last few years. We must proceed immediately to take steps to build a disarmament architecture that would build a new paradigm of collective defence based on the principles and objectives set out for achieving non-proliferation and disarmament.

Mr. Benmehidi (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): It is particularly pleasant for me to see you, Mr. Chairman, known to all as an excellent diplomat, presiding over the work of this Committee entrusted with disarmament and international security. I would like to extend to you my most wholehearted congratulations and my sincere wishes for success in your difficult task. I am sure you will be able to successfully carry out this job to the satisfaction of all member States. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate all of the members of the Bureau and to assure them of my delegation's full support. I would like to pay a wholehearted tribute to your predecessor, Mr. U Mya Than of Myanmar, for the remarkable way in which he headed the work of this Committee during the previous session. Finally, my sincere thanks go to Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his commitment and valuable contribution to the cause of disarmament.

I cannot fail to reiterate on this occasion the energetic condemnation by Algeria of the terrorist attacks that have plunged the United States of America into mourning, and to express once again our deep sympathy and solidarity to the Government and the people of the United States.

The new context that emerged at the end of the cold war and its ideological confrontation promoted the advent of a climate of détente and cooperation that offered better prospects for dialogue and consultation in disarmament, which remains at the heart of the problems of international peace and security.

We have witnessed a qualitative change in thinking; this has been translated into a relaxation of positions, which has led in the field of disarmament to a liberation of initiatives that for a long time were held hostage by the narrow interplay between Powers. The encouraging results that were reached during the last decade, made manifest by the conclusion of a series of treaties, both multilateral and bilateral, have given both impetus and real content to the disarmament process.

Efforts to free humankind from the spectre of weapons of mass destruction were enhanced with the attainment of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaties (START I and START II), the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the historic commitment undertaken by the nuclear-weapon States during the Sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in April 2000 to totally eliminate their nuclear arsenals. However, the considerable progress made only partially covers our concerns. Similarly, the relative euphoria to which this progress gave rise cannot make us in any way forget that the road to be travelled in the field of nuclear disarmament, which remains the top priority for all of us, will be long and arduous.

To reach the general and complete disarmament that we so ardently wish for, bold action will have to be undertaken, such as promoting a renewed strategic approach that would enshrine the end of the antiquated doctrine of nuclear deterrence; exclude any initiative or measure that could jeopardize the climate of détente and weaken what has been patiently attained over the course of the last few years in disarmament; and effectively address priority issues for the attainment of disarmament, based strongly on scrupulous respect for the principles contained in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament.

We will do this even more easily if the commitment undertaken by nuclear-weapon States to totally eliminate their arsenals is begun to be put into practice, and if the nuclear-weapon States undertake to implement article VI of the NPT, which is binding in our view, by engaging in good faith in negotiations to totally eliminate nuclear weapons, as strongly supported by the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice.

It is also extremely urgent that the Conference on Disarmament be reactivated and reach agreement on its programme of work, and that, as the sole multilateral negotiation body, it tackle the essential questions before it, such as the preparation of binding legal instruments on the prohibition of the production of fissile material and the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

From this point of view, my delegation, which was pleased at the nomination on 22 June 2001 of the special coordinators entrusted with the re-examination of the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, the expansion of its composition and the improvement of its operation, must express its disappointment at the continuation of differences that prevent this body from carrying out the duties entrusted to it. Furthermore, we believe that the bilateral approach should not marginalize, but should supplement and strengthen, the

multilateral approach. In that regard, we believe that respect for the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty can only strengthen the disarmament process.

It is comforting to see today that nuclear-weapon-free zones have been established under the Tlatelolco Treaty, the Rarotonga Treaty, the Bangkok Treaty, the Pelindaba Treaty, in Latin America and the Caribbean, the South Pacific, Southeast Asia and Africa. These are achievements that fortunately complement each other and have thus reduced considerably non-proliferation risks and contributed to strengthening international peace and security.

In our view, my delegation salutes the laudable efforts undertaken by the Central Asian countries in order to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone, as well as the efforts of Mongolia, which has adopted nuclear-weapon-free State status.

We hope that similar efforts will be agreed to in other regions, particularly the Middle East, in order to achieve a world fully free of weapons of mass destruction.

The lack of progress in creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is a grave concern for us. The achievement of this objective depends quite clearly on the acceptance of Israel — the only nation at the regional level that is not a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) — of the need to eliminate its nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction that it has and to submit its nuclear facilities to the comprehensive safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Our call for general and complete disarmament is based on our firm conviction that there is no alternative to disarmament, the only choice that will definitively free humanity from the threat of its extinction, guarantee peace and security in the world and release resources allocated to weapons for economic and social development.

Algeria, which devotes only a small percentage of its revenues to national defence expenditures, has chosen to promote research development for the peaceful use of nuclear energy in various fields of socio-economic activities and is associated with various disarmament endeavours, including nuclear, chemical, biological and conventional ones.

We have, once again, recently provided proof of our firm commitment to disarmament by proceeding in December 2000 to ratify two conventions — the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. I wish, in this context, to take this opportunity to reiterate Algeria's intention to ratify the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty in the near future.

It is also in this spirit that my delegation welcomes the beginning almost three months ago here of the process of the fight against the phenomenon of trafficking in small arms and light weapons, whose destabilizing effects seriously threaten international peace and security.

In order to propose realistic and appropriate measures, the programme of action adopted at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which has our full support, has laid the foundation of international cooperation and has marked the path of common action and solidarity in order to eradicate that scourge, the main supply source of terrorism and of conflict zones.

In this regard, I wish to take this opportunity to pay a strong tribute to Ambassador Camilo Reyes of Colombia and Ambassador Carlos dos Santos of Mozambique for the remarkable efforts deployed for the success of this important Conference, just as we were pleased at the holding in New York from 30 July to 3 August 2001, of the first meeting of the Panel of Governmental Experts on Missiles in All Their Aspects. This initiative is an important step forward toward taking up, within the framework of the United Nations system, the problem of missiles, which, over and above their peaceful uses, are primarily vectors of weapons of mass destruction of a truly lethal nature.

Following these positive changes of the last few years that have strengthened the need for a renewed strategic vision of peace and stability throughout the world, it is necessary that international security be separated from military factors and go beyond security concepts based on nuclear weapons.

In the interdependent world that is being built, where economic and social development appears to be the real foundation of peace and coexistence among peoples, the international community as a whole is called on to face together the new challenges of the

globalization of trade and the disappearance of borders, to rid humanity of the scourge of war and the new dangers that threaten it in the form of terrorism, drug trafficking, pandemics and organized crime and to expand to all States of the world the prosperity and stability that prevail in the northern part of our planet.

This is Algeria's wish, and these are the essential principles around which my country's policy is articulated and which it has always followed with a sincere will, aimed at favouring dialogue and consultation and strengthening security within the traditional frameworks of inclusion and solidarity. That is why Algeria is working together with other Maghreb countries to establish a stable, united, homogenous and prosperous whole among the five countries that make up the Arab Maghreb Union.

That is also why Algeria is fully committed to the settlement of conflicts in Africa, why it works to strengthen security and cooperation between the countries of the continent, so as to be able to respond to the demands of economic and social development and why it has taken an active role in the creation of the African Union and the launching of the New African Initiative, enabling the African continent to begin its economic, social and political rehabilitation. It is also for that reason the blossoming of the "lake of peace and cooperation" of the Mediterranean has always been an essential objective of Algeria's international action.

Indeed, our desire to make the Mediterranean Basin a haven of peace, cooperation and security finds its expression in our support for the Barcelona Declaration, the manifestation of the new perception of the Euro-Mediterranean as a whole, and for other consultation mechanisms that emphasize recognition of the historical nature of the relations between the countries of the two shores.

The commitment expressed by my country to the process of construction of the Euro-Mediterranean space, undertaken six years ago, is based strongly on its deep conviction that only joint and concerted action can consolidate stability and security in this region, and from that, to lay down, within the framework of a global approach, the basis of solidarity and cooperation based on the community of interests and a mutually advantageous partnership.

While we are aware of the complexity of the work of disarmament and the enormous efforts that we still need to agree to in order to overcome the pitfalls in the way of its completion, we are no less convinced that general and complete disarmament remains the only salubrious option for future generations as long as a spirit of solidarity and cooperation prevails among peoples and it is recognized that the security of some cannot be achieved at the expense of the underdevelopment and poverty of others.

Mr. Hu Xiaodi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First of all, let me congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee at the current session. I am convinced that, with your rich experience and outstanding diplomatic skills, you will guide this session to success. The Chinese delegation assures you of its full cooperation with and support for you and other members of the Bureau. Please also allow me to express our appreciation for the excellent work of the Chairman at the last session, Ambassador Mya Than of Myanmar. I also take this opportunity to thank Under-Secretary-General Mr. Dhanapala and the Department for Disarmament Affairs, under his leadership, for the unremitting efforts they have made in promoting the international cause of disarmament. We hope that the Department will play a bigger role in the future.

This session is being held against a special backdrop. On 11 September New York City and Washington, D.C., were hit by a series of terrorist attacks, which caused a tremendous number of casualties, including Chinese, and huge property losses. The Chinese Government and people were deeply shocked, and express their deep sympathy and condolences to the victims of the attacks. The Chinese Government condemns and opposes all forms of terrorist activities by any country, organization, group or individual. International terrorism not only causes severe humanitarian disasters, but also poses threats to the security of all countries and world peace. The Chinese Government supports strengthened efforts by the international community to combat terrorism, including the endeavour to completely eliminate its root causes, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter and other universally recognized principles of international law. We stand ready to cooperate with other countries in the fight against terrorism.

The terrorist attacks in the United States have once again highlighted the importance of international cooperation in safeguarding world peace and the

security of countries. They clearly show that in the twenty-first century, when security challenges are increasingly diversified, with the rapid development of science and technology and the steady deepening of economic globalization, only international cooperation can bring about real security. Establishing a new concept of security based on international cooperation has become a pressing task of our time.

International arms control and disarmament naturally fit into such a new security concept. With the concerted efforts of the international community in the past decades, a basic legal system governing international arms control and disarmament has been put in place. It has become part and parcel of the global collective security architecture centred around the United Nations, and plays a crucial role in maintaining the global and regional security order. In the new situation, the integrity and authority of this international legal system should not be undermined. Instead, the system should be strengthened and improved. Any act that detracts from this legal system will prove to be short-sighted, and will only add uncertainty and unpredictability to the international security landscape, and that will serve nobody's security interests.

The terrorist attacks in the United States will have far-reaching ramifications for international security. In the face of this horrendous human tragedy, every Government needs to seriously reflect upon its own security strategy and priorities. The bloodshed and the terror have amply demonstrated that a Maginot-type missile defence simply is not the way to counter the threat of terrorism. Such a defence can only bring to the world a false sense of security, mistrust among nations and ensuing detriment to international security. Here we call upon the country concerned to heed the appeal of the international community and stop the development and deployment of destabilizing missile defence systems.

For the purpose of safeguarding world peace and security, the international community should take concerted action to strengthen international mechanisms aimed at preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). To this end, it is essential to secure universal participation in the common endeavour, which requires an approach of cooperation rather than confrontation, and a uniform standard rather than double or even multiple standards. It is now imperative to strictly abide by and continue improving the international legal instruments in the field of non-proliferation.

The Chinese side deeply regrets the fact that, after nearly seven years of negotiation, the very basic approach of the proposed protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) has been negated, leading to the suspension of the negotiations. For this does not help forging international consensus on non-proliferation, and can only be detrimental to international non-proliferation efforts.

On the issue of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), it is our hope that all countries that have not done so sign and ratify the treaty, and fully support the work of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO).

As a means of delivery of WMD, missiles have drawn increasingly greater attention from the international community. Just as in the case of WMD, the only effective way to address missile proliferation is to build a comprehensive and non-discriminatory multilateral mechanism. China agrees to a leading role for the United Nations in dealing with the missile issue, supports the work of its Panel of Governmental Experts on Missiles, and stands ready to make its contribution to this process.

Outer space belongs to all humanity, and mankind has a common desire for its peaceful utilization. However, it is most worrying that outer space is faced with an increasing danger of weaponization. As a means of pursuing unilateral military supremacy, a strategic concept on the control of space and related long-term plans have been developed, with a view to putting weapons into outer space. Such moves will lead to grave consequences. Indeed, the prevention of the weaponization, of and an arms race in, outer space has stood out as an urgent and realistic issue. Therefore, the international community must act without delay to negotiate and conclude as soon as possible a necessary international legal instrument so as to protect outer space from the threat of war. The Chinese delegation holds the view that, as the only multilateral disarmament negotiating body, the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva is the best venue for such negotiations.

Complete nuclear disarmament and a nuclear-weapon-free world is the common aspiration of all people across the world. The twentieth century was a

century of nuclear weapons, and the twenty-first century should be a century free of nuclear weapons. In this regard, countries having the largest and most sophisticated nuclear arsenals shoulder special and primary responsibilities. Progress in nuclear disarmament on their part will create favourable conditions for the medium-sized and small nuclear-weapon States to join in the process. The Chinese delegation appreciates the expressed intention of the country concerned to reduce its nuclear weapons unilaterally. In the meantime, it must be pointed out that genuine nuclear disarmament must be irreversible and verifiable. Therefore, it should be carried out in a legally binding manner.

The end of the cold war marked the drawing to a close of international relations characterized by the confrontation between military blocs. For the nuclear-weapon States to abandon cold-war thinking, they should, first and foremost, fundamentally readjust their offensive nuclear strategies by renouncing their policy of first use of nuclear weapons. The Chinese Government therefore wishes to renew its appeal for the five nuclear-weapon States to undertake never to be the first to use nuclear weapons against one another, and to undertake, unconditionally and in a legally binding manner, never to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. That will help enhance mutual trust and cooperation among countries, and facilitate the process of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and the establishment of a fair and rational international security order.

We hope that all countries of the world, and the nuclear-weapon States in particular, remain loyal to the objective of establishing a world free of nuclear weapons by consolidating, rather than undermining, strategic stability and mutual trust, which are essential to any progress in nuclear disarmament; and by advancing, rather than impeding, the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Furthermore, we should proceed to negotiating a fissile material cut-off treaty and an agreement on security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States, banning the first use and other use of nuclear weapons, as well as on withdrawing nuclear weapons stationed on the territory of other countries and abandoning nuclear-umbrella and nuclear-sharing policies. Together with all these measures, the process of nuclear-weapon reduction should be further pursued until the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons is achieved.

As an original State party to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), China attaches great importance to the implementation of the Convention and has strictly and faithfully carried out its obligations under the Convention. We are happy to see that, with joint efforts by the international community, the implementation of the Convention has on the whole been good in the four years since it entered into force. China hopes that those that have not yet done so will sign and ratify the CWC at an early date, and that States parties will conscientiously fulfil their obligations with a view to achieving comprehensive, just and effective implementation.

China was a victim of the use of chemical weapons. Even today, the large quantities of chemical weapons abandoned by Japan on the territory of China are still posing a serious threat to the security of the Chinese people and to their ecological environment. In recent years, some progress has been made in the disposal of the abandoned chemical weapons. However, that progress still falls far short of the expectations of the Chinese people and the requirements of the provisions of the CWC. It is our hope that the country concerned will work out a comprehensive and practical destruction programme as soon as possible in accordance with its obligations under the Convention, which should guarantee the safety of the local people and the environment so that the substantive destruction process can be started and the grave danger posed by the abandoned chemical weapons can be eliminated within the time frame set forth in the Convention.

In recent years, the illicit trade in small arms has increasingly become a focus of international attention. The illicit traffic in and the excessive accumulation of small arms exacerbate wars and regional conflicts, obstruct post-war reconstruction and cause severe humanitarian problems. Last July, the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects was convened, marking a new stage in international efforts to combat the illicit trade in small arms. China, which has always supported the international effort in this regard, participated constructively in the Conference. China will faithfully carry out the Programme of Action adopted at the Conference and work with others to press ahead with the relevant process. China welcomes

the Firearms Protocol to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and is positively considering the question of signing the Protocol.

The Second Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons will be held at the end of this year. China will actively participate in the relevant deliberations and, together with other delegations, will try to find better ways and means to implement the obligations of the Convention and to resolve the humanitarian concerns caused by certain conventional weapons. It is our view that the most important task now is to concentrate our resources and attention on enhancing the universality and effectiveness of the Convention.

China has always held that the issue of landmines bears on both humanitarian concerns and the legitimate need of sovereign States for self-defence. The two must be balanced, and neither can be neglected. China understands the humanitarian concerns of the international community about civilian casualties caused by landmines and supports the international efforts to address this issue. China has taken an active part in international assistance to mine-clearance actions. This year, China donated mine-detection and clearance equipment to mine-stricken countries such as Angola, Cambodia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Namibia and Rwanda.

In the past century, mankind experienced the scourges of two world wars and the misery of cold-war confrontation. Looking into the new century, humanity is still faced with numerous severe challenges and tests. Creating a long-term stable, secure, reliable and peaceful international environment remains a common task of the international community. The basic tenet of China's foreign policy is to maintain world peace and promote common development. No matter how the world changes, China will not alter its foreign policy of peace. In the new century, China wishes to work together with other countries to promote international arms control and disarmament.

Mr. Guerreiro (Brazil): I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman — and through you the other members of the Bureau — on your election. Please accept our best wishes and the assurances that you will have the full cooperation of the Brazilian delegation during our work. It is also with satisfaction that I refer to the dedication and ability with which Ambassador U Mya Than conducted the work of the First Committee in the year 2000. A word of recognition should also go to Under-Secretary-General Jayantha Dhanapala and his team at the Department for Disarmament Affairs, from whom Brazil has seen a continued demonstration of professionalism and support for the cause of disarmament. We thank Ambassador Dhanapala for his statement before the First Committee.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered yesterday on behalf of the Rio Group by the representative of Chile.

Let me once again reiterate our profound sympathy and solidarity to all those who suffered as a result of the tragic loss of life caused by the grievous terrorist attacks of 11 September. Those despicable acts were greeted with outrage in Brazil. Our thoughts go out to the victims and their families.

The attacks on the United States of America sought to sow fear and paralysis. They failed. The sober but determined attitude of the American people has inspired respect and solidarity, and has helped to forge a global sentiment that the time has come to deal decisively with terrorism.

The year since the holding of the last session of the First Committee has been a sombre one in the disarmament field. There are distressing signs of an increasing lack of interest from the major players regarding progress within the multilateral framework. The continued paralysis of the Conference on Disarmament is an eloquent example of a gradual disengagement by key States and of the disappearance of the motivation needed to promote coordinated action in the disarmament arena. It is morally imperative that all the words of commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation be translated into deeds.

We welcome unilateral initiatives leading to reduction in arsenals, but they cannot be, and are not meant to be, substitutes for the international disarmament architecture. No unilateral measure can replace the stability, certainty and foreseeability of a multilaterally negotiated instrument.

We are concerned about the tendency to avoid the multilateral approach and to deal unilaterally or bilaterally with matters that are by nature universal. Issues relating to international security touch all countries and are of universal interest. We need

therefore to produce multilateral responses to universal problems. Measures that affect the international security environment should be discussed multilaterally, which would foster collective responsibility and strengthen the mechanisms that the community of nations created for that purpose.

In our view, the only truly effective defence against weapons of mass destruction is their total elimination. The proliferation of shields runs counter to the current logic of the advantages of disarmament. A safer world is not one that has plenty of defensive systems against weapons of mass destruction. It is one that does not need such defences, for weapons of mass destruction would not exist. We should strive to curb proliferation and to fulfil the disarmament obligations contained in treaties, so that there will be fewer arms threatening humanity.

In the aftermath of the horrendous terrorist attacks of 11 September, much has been said about the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction in the hands of terrorists. Brazil shares those concerns and welcomes initiatives aimed at diminishing the risk. Terrorism should be vigorously fought and should be deprived of all its tools of action. In the search for means to combat international terrorism, we highlight the importance of disarmament and non-proliferation regimes, as well as of national and international control over technologies used in the manufacture of weapons of mass destruction.

We must be careful, however, that the discussion about the possibility of the use of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists does not result in the implicit justification of the indefinite retention of such weapons by States. We view any use of weapons of mass destruction as misuse. They should be eliminated in accordance with international obligations.

We fully support the practical steps in the disarmament area identified by the Secretary-General in his statement to the General Assembly last week on international terrorism. We agree with his assessment that "there is much we can do to help prevent future terrorist acts carried out with weapons of mass destruction" (*A/56/PV.12*), and we agree that there is a need to strengthen global norms against the use or proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Brazil is ready to work, in the First Committee and in other disarmament forums, towards the implementation of all the objectives the Secretary-General identified, in particular regarding efforts to ensure the universality, verification and full implementation of key treaties relating to weapons of mass destruction, including those outlawing chemical and biological weapons and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Turning to the agenda before us, we hope that the First Committee will be able to foster a constructive and forward-looking approach to pressing issues in the area of disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament. More than one year after the Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT and the Millennium Summit, little political will has been shown that would prove that those were not isolated events and that the commitments made on those occasions will be followed up.

Brazil is also of the view that all States should abide by their commitments to nuclear non-proliferation, in particular those addressed in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. In that vein, we call upon States to avoid taking steps that could imply tacit recognition of nuclear-weapon status, thus undermining the international community's determination to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

A nuclear-weapon-free world is an aspiration and a common responsibility of the entire international community. The objective of turning nuclear weapons illegitimate is furthered by extending, through new nuclear-weapon-free zones, the geographical space where they are illegal. We support the consolidation of existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and the creation of new ones. With that in mind, we will once again present a draft resolution on a southern hemisphere free of nuclear weapons, which we are sure will continue to enjoy the support of the overwhelming majority of Member States.

Brazil stresses, as we did through the ministerial communiqué of the New Agenda Coalition read out yesterday by the representative of South Africa, the importance of the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty) in the promotion and maintenance of international stability, and we call upon all States to refrain from any action that could lead to a new nuclear arms race or that could impact negatively on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

We expect that the upcoming Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) can provide momentum for universal adherence to that instrument, for continued respect for the spirit of the Treaty and for the observance of unilateral moratoriums until the Treaty has entered into force.

I am personally honoured at having been chosen to chair the work of the Panel of Governmental Experts on the issue of missiles in all its aspects. I am glad to report that the exchange of ideas during the Panel's first session was very encouraging. The group of experts will make every effort to submit to the General Assembly at its next session its contribution to the international discussion of the issue of missiles. In our understanding, the question of missiles should be dealt with in a process involving the broadest possible participation.

In the chemical weapons area, we welcome the recent approval by the General Assembly of the agreement on the relationship between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We expect to hear a report from the Director-General of the OPCW on the work of that organization. We fully support the efforts of the Director-General, Mr. José Mauricio Bustani, to lead the organization in an impartial, even-handed and competent manner. The full implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention must be seen as an urgent endeavour of the international community with a view to eliminating all chemical arsenals, verifying industrial activities using sensitive chemicals, promoting increasing cooperation for peaceful uses, and controlling the international exchange of sensitive chemicals, a task entrusted to the OPCW but regrettably not yet implemented despite the wish of the majority of States parties.

Brazil is deeply disappointed at the lack of consensus regarding the draft protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention (BCW), as proposed by Mr. Tibor Toth, Chairman of the Ad Hoc Group of States Parties to the Convention. We can no longer continue to ignore the threats to security posed by biological weapons; we must work together to reinforce the BWC regime. We expect the fifth Review Conference of the BWC, to be held at Geneva in November and December, to succeed in identifying the necessary tools to prevent proliferation and to ensure biological disarmament.

For Brazil, the provisions contained in the draft protocol would doubtless contribute to strengthening international security in the biological field. We should do our utmost not to totally squander the product of more than six years of intensive work. No other technology of mass destruction is as geographically widespread as the biological one. That explains why effective international action against biological weapons needs to be universal. Yet, to be universal, agreements must be seen as legitimate and must be negotiated by all States. There is no alternative to multilateralism when it comes to countering the risks of the proliferation of biological weapons.

In the field of the peaceful use of nuclear energy, it is with satisfaction that we bring to the attention of the Committee the fact that in July, Brazil and Argentina celebrated the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials, a landmark that attests to the excellent level of transparency and friendship between our two countries. On the same occasion, a joint declaration was signed that created the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for the Application of Nuclear Energy, which aims at intensifying cooperation on the peaceful application of nuclear science and technologies.

The United Nations disarmament calendar for the first semester of this year was marked by preparations for and the holding of the Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Brazil welcomes the adoption of the Programme of Action and the launching of a follow-up process which will enable the commitments made during the Conference to be translated into action. We see the Conference as a first step towards global treatment of the issue. It also marks the definite inclusion of the question of small arms in the international agenda.

A great deal needs to be done. Regional implementation will be important, as will the adoption of measures at the national level that are consistent with the Programme of Action. We share the views expressed by the President of the Conference and by the Secretary-General that the objectives of the meeting would have been better met had the Conference been able to adopt provisions on civilian possession of small arms and on the banning of their sale to actors other than Governments or entities duly authorized by them.

Some weeks ago, in Managua, during the Third Meeting of States Parties to the landmine Convention, we had the opportunity to reiterate our commitment to the banning of anti-personnel landmines. We consider the universalization of the mine-ban treaty to be an important goal, and our political support has been coupled with practical measures. Brazil has also assisted in mine-clearance operations by providing personnel in the context of United Nations missions in Angola and in South and Central America.

The First Committee opens this week at a moment when security aspects dominate the international agenda as they have not done in decades. It is a moment of challenge for the international community, and a situation in which the United Nations is called upon to live up to its responsibilities. It is also an occasion that has united the membership, thus opening opportunities to build, from adversity, a more stable world.

As frightful as it may be, it is not only the threat of nuclear, biological or chemical terrorism that should make us renew our efforts for the elimination of those weapons. It is the conviction that by acting decisively now, we will be able to free future generations from the threat of this scourge.

Terrorism is serving as a wake-up call for Governments about the need to strengthen non-proliferation and disarmament measures. The international commitment to general and complete disarmament should be pursued with the same resolve, vigour and unity as we will muster to combat international terrorism.

That is what we expect the First Committee to do.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): At the outset, Mr. Chairman, I should like to join preceding speakers in extending to you my delegation's warmest congratulations on your well-deserved election and to pledge our full support and cooperation. We are confident that your diplomatic skill, personal experience in the field of disarmament and dedication will bring the Committee's work to a successful conclusion. Our felicitations also go to the other members of the Bureau on their election.

My delegation would also like to express its deep gratitude and appreciation to Ambassador U Mya Than of Myanmar for his able guidance of the work of the Committee last year.

Before proceeding with my statement, allow me to express once again my delegation's sincere condolences to the people of the United States for the terrible loss of human life and our deepest sympathy to the families of the victims and to the people of our host city, New York.

This year the General Assembly, including this Committee, is conducting its work in unconventional circumstances, at a time when international peace and security are being threatened by the unprecedented terrorist attacks of 11 September. These tragic events have highlighted the role that this Committee is called upon to play in promoting international peace and security through multilateral disarmament and arms control processes. My delegation expresses the hope that the Committee's deliberations and discussions will be most productive in promoting the goal of achieving general and complete disarmament as well as in the search for a new, viable concept of security, addressing both existing and emerging threats at the dawn of this century.

In my intervention today, I should like to focus on some issues that, in this delegation's view, should be of priority importance on the current agenda of the Committee.

In our view, given the nature of current security threats, the international community must make greater efforts to reduce and eliminate weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. My delegation shares the view that there is a real need to make tangible progress in the areas of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation — progress which, ironically, has eluded us in the post-cold-war decade.

The States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) rightly concluded last year that

> "the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons." (*NPT/CONF.2000/28, vol. I, part I, p. 15, para. 2*)

My delegation fully subscribes to that view. World leaders also underlined their determination in the 2000 Millennium Declaration to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction. Thus the political will seems to be evident. However, some important international instruments aimed at promoting nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation still await either

entry into force or effective implementation. Therefore, it is vitally important for the international community to translate the manifested political will into reality, to ensure that the unequivocal commitments solemnly made with regard to the total elimination of nuclear weapons, and the steps to be taken in the interim, are practically honoured.

With regard to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, which are important prerequisites for strengthening global peace and security, the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is of paramount importance. The States that have not yet done so, in particular those whose ratification is needed for its entry into force, should sign and ratify it as soon as possible and, pending its entry into force, uphold a moratorium on nuclear-weapon-test explosions or any other nuclear explosions. My delegation expresses the hope that the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into force of the CTBT, to be held during the forthcoming general debate, will give the necessary political impetus in that regard.

Mongolia continues to believe that, in the absence of an alternative solution, the unilateral abrogation of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, so far the cornerstone of global strategic stability, could adversely affect the overall existing strategic balance, with all of the ensuing consequences. Therefore, Mongolia calls upon the parties to the ABM Treaty, pending agreement on a mutually acceptable solution, to refrain from any measure that might undermine the spirit of the Treaty. With respect to strategic arms reductions, Mongolia underlines the importance of early entry into force of the START II Treaty and looks forward to further practical steps that could lead to substantial and meaningful reductions in nuclear arsenals within the START III process.

Still on nuclear disarmament, my delegation also urges the Conference on Disarmament to engage in earnest negotiations on an early conclusion of a universal and verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty. Pending the negotiation of that treaty, we would welcome a moratorium on the production of weapons-grade fissile materials and greater transparency through disclosure of present stocks. In this context, my delegation reiterates its call upon the United Nations to establish, as a transparency and confidence-building measure, a register of all stocks of weapons-grade fissile material as an important addition to the existing United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

Bearing in mind the fact that the credibility of the CTBT and other international instruments prohibiting and destroying weapons of mass destruction depends to a great extent on the effectiveness of their verification regimes, Mongolia welcomes and supports efforts aimed at ensuring reliable operation of the existing control and monitoring systems under the CTBT and the Chemical Weapons Convention and the undertaking of measures to improve the verification mechanism of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). In this connection, my delegation regrets that the talks on a verification protocol to strengthen the 1972 BWC have failed and expresses the hope that further work will be taken up at the upcoming Fifth Review Conference of the parties to be held next month.

Unfortunately, the military doctrines of nuclear-weapon States still place emphasis on nuclear weapons. Therefore, Mongolia supports the adoption of such steps as de-alerting nuclear weapons, the removal of nuclear warheads from delivery vehicles, joint undertakings by the nuclear-weapon Powers of a pledge not to be the first to use nuclear weapons and some other well-known measures as essential safety measures to reduce the risk of unauthorized or miscalculated use of nuclear weapons. We also underline the need to provide legally binding negative security assurances to non-nuclear States parties to the NPT.

The tragedy of 11 September was a serious signal of the increasing danger of possible use by non-state actors of weapons of mass destruction. As the Secretary-General underlined last week in the debate on terrorism, a single attack involving a nuclear or biological weapon could have killed millions. Today's stark reality proves that there is a growing possibility of non-State actors acquiring nuclear, biological or chemical weapons for terrorist purposes. Therefore, besides the legal instruments prohibiting weapons of mass destruction, it is vitally important today for the international community to promote closer cooperation to upgrade the physical protection of nuclear material, combat illicit trafficking in nuclear materials and other radioactive sources and enhance the protection and control of nuclear facilities against acts of terrorism and sabotage. In addition to the nuclear disarmament treaties, my delegation urges the international community to finalize as soon as possible the draft

convention against nuclear terrorism and the comprehensive convention on international terrorism, as well as to speed up the entry into force of the Statute of the International Criminal Court and of the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

The consolidation of existing and the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones are important factors for strengthening non-proliferation as well as regional stability and security. Mongolia, based on its unique geopolitical location, strives to make its modest contribution to this cause. I would like to take this opportunity to express my delegation's gratitude to the Department for Disarmament Affairs, especially its Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, for organizing last month in Sapporo a meeting of independent experts of the P5 and Mongolia to look into ways and means of strengthening Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status. The experts have concluded that further steps need to be taken at the international level to strengthen that status. We believe that the institutionalization of Mongolia's status would be an important measure towards strengthening predictability, confidence-building and non-proliferation in the region.

Mongolia fully shares the legitimate concerns of the international community over the illicit trafficking in and global proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which are the principal instruments of death throughout the world, especially in the regions affected by armed conflicts. Mongolia attaches great importance to the outcome of the first-ever United Nations Conference on this issue, held last July in New York. The Programme of Action adopted at the Conference by consensus is an important step towards preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. At the same time, my delegation, like many others, regrets the failure of the Conference to reach agreement on controlling private ownership of small arms designed for military purposes, as well as their transfer to non-state actors, including, perhaps, even potential terrorists. Nevertheless, my delegation believes that the follow-up measures that have been reflected in the Programme of Action would strengthen the gains of the Conference.

In the subregional context, my country welcomed the historic inter-Korean summit of 2000 and the ensuing dialogue and contacts, which are important in building confidence between the two Koreas and in our region as a whole. Mongolia welcomes and supports practical ideas and proposals aimed at developing in North-East Asia a mechanism to discuss regional security issues of common concern or interest. As the Mongolian delegation underlined last year, perhaps it is time to consider the possibility of engaging in a regional dialogue, starting with a free exchange of views on the framework of such discussions and dialogue. Mongolia is ready to discuss this issue with interested delegations.

In conclusion, I would like to underline once again the importance that Mongolia attaches to the work of this Committee and to express my delegation's readiness to work with you, Mr. Chairman, and the delegations in bringing our common work to a successful conclusion.

Mr. Vassallo (Malta): Mr. Chairman, this being the first time I take the floor in the Committee, allow me to offer my delegation's congratulations on your election as Chairman of this Committee and to promise our full support to you and the Bureau in the fulfilment of your important duties. At this difficult time for the international community, your experience and steady hand in directing our deliberations are most assuring.

Earlier this week the distinguished representative of Belgium delivered a comprehensive statement on behalf of the European Union and associated countries, including Malta, on the array of agenda items before the First Committee. While reiterating our full support for the content of his statement, allow me to make a number of comments from a Maltese perspective.

In the months since the First Committee completed its deliberations last year, Malta has taken two significant steps that express its continuing commitment to the cause of disarmament. On 23 July 2001, the Government of Malta deposited its instrument of ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). The CTBT is one of the major building blocks of the disarmament edifice that makes our world so much safer than it otherwise would be.

In joining the ever-growing number of States parties to the CTBT, Malta would like to call upon those remaining States that have not ratified the Treaty, in particular those countries whose ratification is necessary for the CTBT to come into force, to do so as soon as possible in the interest of international peace and stability.

I would also like to inform the Committee that on 7 May 2001, Malta ratified the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.

Malta attended the recent third meeting of States parties to the Ottawa Convention, for the first time as a ratifying State. It was greatly heartened to witness the sterling work of those delegations and members of civil society that have, in a few short years, transformed the anti-landmines movement into a workable convention, whose provisions are respected not only by the ever-increasing number of States parties but also by non-parties, whose actions are coloured by the moral strength of the Convention.

In conclusion, allow me to express the hope, on behalf of my delegation, that the singleness of purpose that the international community has shown in recent weeks in reaction to the horrific attacks of 11 September can be harnessed in a manner that would allow us to break out of the stalemate that prevents us from making progress on several fronts in the disarmament debate.

Mr. Cappagli (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): First, Mr. Chairman, allow me to convey my delegation's congratulations on your election to preside over the work of the Committee. I have no doubt that your ability, background and vast diplomatic experience will contribute to the success of our work. Also allow me to extend the congratulations of my delegation to the other members of the Bureau.

The recent terrorist attacks were a criminal act, which Argentina — which has also been a victim of grave acts of international terrorism — repudiates. All civilized societies in the world felt their foundations and values of freedom, solidarity, and the respect and adherence to the basic principles of human coexistence were impacted by those acts.

This threat to international peace and security requires strong action from the States, as indicated by the resolutions adopted by the Security Council, in order to find means to intensify and better coordinate the exchange of operational information, among other main aspects, with respect to the trade in arms, explosives and dangerous materials, and with respect to the threat posed by the possibility that terrorist groups might acquire weapons of mass destruction.

The Republic of Argentina, as was expressed in our country's intervention in the Committee during the past session of the General Assembly, maintains more than ever that universal accession to legal instruments for non-proliferation and the disarmament of weapons of mass destruction should be the goal we set for the first decade of the twenty-first century. Only if we set that goal will it be possible to lay the foundations for guaranteed mutual security.

Argentina believes it is essential to intensify the technical facilities for carrying out the measures of control established by the subregional, regional and international agreements on weapons of mass destruction. To do this, priority must be given to adapting, within each country's judicial system, the norms and procedures for facilitating the exchange of information for combating the proliferation of these weapons.

Argentina promotes transparency in the transfer of sensitive technology and the adoption of common norms and parameters for the identification of dual-use materials in order to prevent illicit trade, which could have serious regional and international consequences.

Argentina sees in the upcoming session of the Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) an opportunity for effective implementation of the practical steps agreed on by the 187 States parties to the Treaty in order to advance the systematic and progressive efforts to implement Article VI of that instrument. In this context, we wish to emphasize the call to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the immediate beginning of negotiations within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

Argentina hopes that the Second Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty will be an opportunity to reaffirm the importance of this treaty as a means of assuring the ending of nuclear testing.

In our subregion, this year marks the tenth year since the creation of the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABACC). This agency is the result of a nuclear rapprochement between our two countries and represents a fundamental part of the broader commitment to a policy of nuclear non-proliferation

and the promotion of the exclusively peaceful use of nuclear energy.

It should be pointed out that on the basis of the confidence and transparency on nuclear materials achieved through the system of safeguards and mutual monitoring, by means of the ABACC, on 14 August 2001, the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Nuclear Energy Applications (ABAEN) was created. Its mission is to promote and intensify cooperation between both countries in the field of the application of nuclear energy, to identify areas in which joint projects can be designed and executed, and to establish mechanisms for the implementation of such cooperation.

Argentina regrets that after six years the negotiations of the Ad Hoc Group of the States parties to the Biological Weapons Convention on the subject of the text proposed by the Chairman has not reached agreement on the creation of an effective verification protocol that would reduce the risks presented by these weapons and discourage their proliferation.

In this context, we believe that all countries should participate as we elaborate a legally binding instrument, and we call for innovative approaches that might serve to strengthen the verification regime in a legitimate way.

The policy of the Argentine Republic, which includes the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, international security and export controls on sensitive technology and military materials, is also sensitive to concerns about missile proliferation.

The strengthening of international norms and political instruments designed to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems is of vital importance to my country. For a long time, the Missile Technology Control Regime, to which Argentina is a party, was the sole control and monitoring mechanism with regard to missile non-proliferation. We must now follow up this approach by taking action at the global and multilateral levels. That is why my country supports the universalization of the draft international code of conduct in this area, which is to be submitted to an ad hoc negotiating process with a view to the holding of an international conference for its adoption in 2002. Furthermore, we support the work being done by the United Nations Panel of Governmental Experts, which will also submit its report during the next session of the General Assembly, in accordance with General Assembly 55/33 A.

As is well known, Argentina is on the basis of its own experience, an enthusiastic promoter of confidence-building measures. The confidence-building measures that we have implemented at the regional, subregional and bilateral levels have, to a large extent, contributed to the creation of a new reality throughout our hemisphere which has resulted in mature, strong and productive relationships. We therefore hope that all delegations will demonstrate their political will and commitment so as to ensure that next year the Disarmament Commission, in concluding consideration of this item, will make recommendations that yield benefits in terms of greater understanding among all of us.

In this context, Argentina would like to stress the conclusions of the work that we, together with Chile, entrusted to the Economic Commission for Latin America with regard to a standardized common methodology for assessing defence expenditure. Furthermore, we are particularly interested in the similar initiative taken by Chile and Peru, and we hope that the same methodology will be used by other countries in the region.

That model will make it possible for us to formulate rational comparisons of expenditure with a view to setting benchmarks for confidence-building and transparency. Furthermore, it should be considered as complementary to other transparency and confidence-building measures, such as the submission of information to the Register of Conventional Arms and the obligations entered into in the context of international agreements.

The United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects represented a turning point in the attitude of States to combating the illicit trafficking in such weaponry. The Programme of Action adopted at that Conference sets out a series of measures to put an end to that illicit trade, making arms transfers more transparent and supporting regional disarmament measures.

Argentina welcomes the fact that the Programme of Action includes a commitment to establishing standards for the criminalization of the manufacture of and illicit trade in such weapons, as well as to devising administrative standards and setting up bodies to

monitor their manufacture, circulation, export and import. The development of international criteria on arms brokering, the detection of routes used for illicit trafficking and the location of supply lines is also promising.

Using the Programme of Action adopted by the Conference last July, as well as the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials and other international instruments in this arena as a benchmark, Argentina believes that it is vital to implement coordination mechanisms so as to activate the instruments that are already in existence to harmonize standards and make effective procedures designed to combat the illicit trafficking in and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

The arms group established by the Common Market of the Southern Cone (MERCOSUR) and Bolivia and Chile, created in accordance with the decision taken by the Presidents of the six member countries, has set the goal of establishing a subregional mechanism to ensure implementation and follow up of both the Inter-American Convention and the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

The Ottawa Convention succeeded in enshrining as an international obligation the call for the elimination of anti-personnel landmines. Such mines cause serious injury to civilians and their harmful effects continue for decades, well beyond the end of the conflicts that gave rise to their use in the first place. Our part of the world is one of those that have responded most positively to this commitment, inasmuch as virtually all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean are parties to the Convention.

Argentina fully shares in the objectives enshrined in that Convention, and has been working towards its universalization and full implementation. In this context, we would like to emphasize that in November last year in Buenos Aires, Argentina and Canada organized a regional seminar on mine destruction, in which the Organization of American States took part. That seminar represented a major step towards the implementation of article 4 of the Convention.

Furthermore, my country hopes that the next Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons will provide an opportunity to strengthen that legal instrument and promote the broadening of its application to all armed conflicts, both international and otherwise. We hope that the international community will find a solution to the problem posed by explosive remnants of war, as well as other weapons that cause indiscriminate harm.

We must advance towards building a safer and more integrated world. If we adopt an integrated approach, we, the United Nations as a whole, will be able to find solutions to problems such as disarmament and arms control, which affect us all.

We hope that this will prove to be a fruitful session of the First Committee. You can rest assured, Mr. Chairman, of the full cooperation of my delegation.

Mr. Keita (Mali) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of my delegation, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. I would also like to extend my congratulations to the other officers of the Bureau. You can rely on our support in carrying out your difficult task. Finally, I would like to thank Mr. Dhanapala for his very elucidating comments at the opening of our discussion.

Please allow me to join other speakers in expressing my delegation's solidarity and deep compassion to the American delegation following the terrorist attacks that plunged the country into mourning on 11 September. These acts prove once again that it is up to us to elaborate new concepts to better guarantee international security.

The question of disarmament today is of particular interest in the world. Mali, which played a pioneering role in the area of micro-disarmament, will continue to support actively international efforts in this area. In national terms, Mali initiated novel operations within the context of a project called "Project of support for local commissions for the recovery of small arms". Supported by Belgian technical cooperation, it consisted of financing collective economic activities for the benefit of persons who had surrendered weapons and who would then become involved in development activities with the assistance of established local commissions for the recovery of small arms.

The basic principle of "development against weapons" gives rise to free and voluntary disarmament. To date, 422 small arms and thousands of rounds of ammunition have been voluntarily turned over by the localities involved. The involvement of neighbouring countries is keenly hoped for to ensure the success of the project, because it has a positive impact on post-conflict peace-building. In subregional terms, at the level of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which my country is now chairing, the most important event remains the renewal of the moratorium on the import, export and manufacture of light weapons signed in Abuja, Nigeria, on 31 October 1998 by the ECOWAS heads of State. This renewal, which takes effect on 1 November 2001 for a period of three years, highlights the determination of ECOWAS to contribute effectively to international security. It is desirable that this initiative extend to all subregions.

The international community must support and accompany these efforts of ECOWAS member States with greater cooperation and better coordination in the overall action to halt the phenomenon of the proliferation of small arms. As in previous years, we shall introduce for adoption a draft resolution on assistance to States to halt illicit trafficking in and for the collection of small arms and light weapons.

In regional terms, Mali hosted an African Ministerial Conference on the proliferation of small arms in November and December 2000, at the end of which the Bamako Declaration was adopted. This text was the inspiration for the work of the first United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects; it reaffirms the commitment of States members of the Organization of African Unity to the principles and rules of international law and expresses their grave concern at the persistence of the devastating consequences of the proliferation of light weapons in Africa.

Mali welcomes the holding of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the adoption of its Programme of Action. The challenge remains to move ahead with the agenda that we have prepared in this area.

We believe that the control and monitoring of illicit trafficking in small arms is essential. It requires vigilance and firm commitment on the part of the international community in order to allow the United Nations to play the central role that it should play.

In the field of nuclear disarmament, Mali will continue to lend its active support to international efforts. In that respect, it attaches particular importance to the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones created on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at between States of the region involved. Africa, as we know, has acquired the Treaty of Pelindaba. In that regard, we appeal for commitments undertaken during the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to be respected. At last year's Conference, an ambitious programme of action was adopted.

To conserve all of the NPT's credibility, we believe it necessary to take into account a certain number of measures: the universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT); the moratorium on nuclear weapons tests; the implementation of the provisions of START II and the conclusion of START III; the conclusion of an agreement on guarantees for non-nuclear-weapon States; and the transparent management of fissile materials under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

It is regrettable that the work of the Disarmament Commission was not successful regarding a fissile material cut-off treaty.

We welcome the holding in Dakar, Senegal, next month of a workshop on international cooperation and national procedures for implementation and ratification of the CTBT by the States of West and Central Africa. That workshop will make it possible to make certain matters more visible, such as the question of the techniques to be used for the Treaty's verification regime, the creation of regional data centres in Africa and the signature and ratification of the Treaty.

In conclusion, the international community should spare no effort to establish confidence in the field of disarmament. Mali pleads for heightened international cooperation and for the strengthening of capacities in the subregions and regions in their efforts to attain disarmament and international security. We express our wish that this session will provide momentum.

Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran): Let me at the outset congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of our Committee at this important juncture. I am sure that your vast experience in disarmament and your diplomatic skills are important assets that will help this Committee to achieve positive results this year.

The major international security development since last year is no doubt the recent tragic terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, D.C., which have outraged the international community. My country, along with other members of the international community, has firmly condemned these terrorist attacks and has expressed its support for collective international efforts within the framework of the United Nations to combat and prevent such horrible acts of violence.

This incident, which was carried out by circles that reject norms and regulations of international law and jeopardize the lives of innocent civilians to achieve their political ends, has rightly caused major concerns within the international community. Although it is a very sad and sorrowful event in contemporary global history, we hope that it will serve to produce a positive outcome, one beneficial to the whole world.

Apart from the security, humanitarian, economic and social aspects of the terrorist attacks, this tragic incident showed that security in the new international arena is indivisible and equally at stake in all parts of our planet. It has also shown that our civilization is more vulnerable than ever to threats, particularly from weapons of mass destruction.

Weapons of mass destruction are the most threatening danger to humanity and civilization. Their use would be so catastrophic that we should mobilize all our efforts to strengthen legal and political restraints against the development, production and use of these inhumane weapons.

Nuclear weapons are the most horrible among weapons of mass destruction and should therefore be dealt with as the highest priority. The magnitude of the devastation caused by such weapons, as experienced in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, is sufficient grounds for increasing our efforts to prevent by all means the use of nuclear weapons and therefore make a ban against such weapons universal.

Five years after the International Court of Justice, in its Advisory Opinion on the legality of the use of nuclear weapons, recalled the legal commitment of all States to implement article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, no tangible efforts have been made to move towards total elimination. The partial bilateral agreements aimed at reducing such weapons are also in limbo. Furthermore, the 2000 Final Document of the Review Conference of the States parties to the NPT, the outcome of their painstaking negotiations over five years, awaits implementation.

The 2000 NPT Review Conference Final Document provides the most viable basis for reviewing the way in which the NPT has been implemented, as well as how its implementation can be secured and strengthened in the future. The elements envisaged in the 2000 Final Document on nuclear disarmament, practical measures to achieve total elimination, including the necessity to conclude arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, as well as the provisions of the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency's and peaceful uses of nuclear energy, are all key ingredients in achieving the common objective of establishing a solid international regime to ban nuclear weapons.

Next year the initiation of a four-year preparatory process to review and strengthen the NPT and its 2000 Final Document will provide the best forum to consolidate such common efforts. We hope that this opportunity will be utilized effectively to encourage further steps to implement the practical measures envisaged in the 2000 Final Document.

In this context, I would like to emphasize the critical importance of the commitment of all States to advance the initiative of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. The establishment of such a zone in the Middle East, which has been endorsed and called for by the General Assembly for the last 25 years, is now only impeded by Israel's intransigent policy of refraining from committing itself not to use and develop nuclear weapons. The 2000 NPT Final Document, adopted by consensus, called Israel on to adhere to the NPT and place its nuclear facilities under the IAEA full-scope safeguards. This international call needs to be pursued with vigilance and in all seriousness.

Israeli policy today is the only source of tension and conflict in the region, and its nuclear capability has produced no less than terror, instability and insecurity. The continuing daily bloodshed of the innocent Palestinian people in the occupied territories is only one of the manifestations of such policies in the region. The international community should make every effort to stop these violent acts against civilians.

Biological weapons, as another dangerous class of weapons of mass destruction, although banned and prohibited under international law, still pose a real threat to our societies. Bioterrorism is not science fiction any more and has the potential to bring the world into an era of fear and insecurity. My country, as an original State party to the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), cannot refrain from expressing its concerns over the lack of universality of this important instrument. Our basic point of departure to fight the development and the proliferation of such weapons should therefore be to concentrate on reinforcing consolidated efforts to achieve universality of the BWC and its effective implementation.

Unfortunately, the recent failure of the 10-year-long negotiations to conclude an additional protocol to this Convention, due to the position of the United States, has caused international concern. We strongly hope that such a development will not give an improper signal to wrong circles under these circumstances. We furthermore remain hopeful that the new situation will encourage the United States to review its position and open the way for stimulating momentum to revive the Geneva negotiations with the aim of concluding the BWC protocol. The protocol would provide States sufficient means to strengthen effective enforcement of the objectives enshrined in the Convention and facilitate and ensure international cooperation for peaceful purposes. Today, encouraging and promoting international cooperation to combat infectious diseases, which are again an emerging global threat to all — developed or developing countries — is proved to be more essential than ever. Effective global combat against infectious diseases can be brought about through the promotion of peaceful cooperation between developed and developing countries.

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) is also suffering from the lack of universality. Every effort should be made to encourage the accession of more parties to the Convention, particularly in the Middle East region. Furthermore, new resources need to be provided to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in The Hague to enable it to engage in a full-scale humanitarian medical operation should any chemical attack be carried out against innocent people. In this respect, my country, based on its particular sad experience as a victim of these inhumane weapons, has continuously presented specific initiatives and provisions within the framework of the CWC and the OPCW aimed at strengthening the Organization's capability and capacity to assist and protect countries against such attacks. We believe basically that the OPCW needs more resources and logistics for the purpose of ensuring assistance and protection for innocent people against chemical weapons.

Although weapons of mass destruction are the most threatening of weapons to our societies, in circumstances of civil war and armed conflicts small arms and light weapons have proved to be equally deadly and brutal. The convening of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects was the culmination of international efforts to address ways and means to stop such illicit trade. I believe that we should be delighted that the Conference was successful in producing a Programme of Action that provides the best possible effective measures at the national, regional and international levels to prevent and combat illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. In the meantime, I would like to join with a great number of States in expressing concern over the failure of the Conference to elaborate a position with regard to the regulation of the domestic circulation of small arms and light weapons as well as the very crucial issue of the transfer of such weapons to non-State actors, because of the position of one State.

We share the position expressed by the President of the Conference in his statement at the Conference. We believe that there is an urgent need to address these issues so that a final agreement can be reached in our future deliberations, in the course of which a review of the implementation of the Programme of Action is envisaged.

Last year's General Assembly resolution on the issue of missiles has now opened the possibility for the United Nations, for the first time ever, to consider and address the issue.

We welcome the establishment of the Panel of Governmental Experts by the United Nations Secretary-General to assist him to prepare a report on missiles in all its aspects, for submission to the next session of the General Assembly. In the first meeting of the Panel, convened this summer, the experts were able to work out the structure of the report, identify the main areas of missile-related issues and address all aspects of missiles in general terms. We are certain that the two remaining meetings of the Panel, envisaged for next year, will provide the best opportunity for the experts to conclude their work successfully and pave the ground for the continuation of the work within the United Nations.

It is now well established that universal norms and guidelines on missiles can be effective if they are multilaterally negotiated and agreed. Any initiative or arrangement short of multilateral negotiations and agreements will not have the credibility to achieve universality. The Panel of Governmental Experts is therefore the best mechanism to address different aspects of missiles and, accordingly, to make its recommendations on the follow-up mechanism. I hereby would like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to the Secretary-General and Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala for their efforts and hard work to establish this Panel.

Mr. Mohammed (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, my delegation would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of this Committee for this year. Congratulations will also be extended by the Permanent Representative of my country when he makes his statement next week.

We understand the importance of saving time so that the Committee will be able to achieve its objectives. We therefore did not want to take the floor before the time came for us to make our general statement. But we find it necessary to explain a few points.

In reference to the statement made by the distinguished representative of Belgium on behalf of the European Union, we would like to clarify the following points.

The first is that the representative of Belgium referred to what he called the secret nuclear programme of Iraq. In this regard, we would like to say that Iraq has no such programme. Iraq is party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and is subject to the full scope of the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In this respect, I would like to refer to the reports of the IAEA, which were presented to the Security Council on 8 October 1997 and on 7 October 1998. I quote from the second document:

> "As reported in detail in the progress report dated 8 October 1997 (document S/1997/779), and based on all credible information available to date, the Agency's verification activities in Iraq have resulted in the evolution of a technically coherent picture of Iraq's clandestine nuclear programme. The verification activities have revealed no indications that Iraq had achieved its programme objective of producing nuclear weapons or that Iraq had produced more than a few grams of weapon-usable nuclear material or had clandestinely acquired such material. Furthermore, there are no indications that there remains in Iraq any physical capability for the production of weapon-usable nuclear material of any practical significance. In February 1994, IAEA completed the removal from Iraq of all weapon-usable nuclear material — essentially research reactor fuel — under IAEA safeguards." (*S/1998/927, para. 17*)

The contents of the report of the International Atomic Energy Agency raises questions as to what was talked about here yesterday. This is the second year in which an inspection team has visited Iraq in full cooperation with the Iraqi authorities. As Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director-General of the IAEA, has pointed out, the team was able to verify that Iraq's nuclear materials are in compliance with the full-scope safeguards regime of the IAEA, as is clear from the report of the IAEA, which was referred to the Security Council in document S/2000/300. There is a similar report for this year.

Secondly, concerning the reference that the distinguished representative of Belgium made to the resolutions of the Security Council, we would like to say that Iraq has implemented all its obligations under Security Council resolution 678 (1991). This was indicated by some members of the Security Council and also by some members of the Special Commission to which the representative referred in his statement.

I would like to quote Mr. Scott Ritter, chief of the concealment unit for United Nations Special

Commission (UNSCOM), in an article in *Arms Control Today*, of June 2000:

> "By the end of 1998, Iraq had, in fact, been disarmed to a level unprecedented in modern history, but UNSCOM and the Security Council were unable — and in some instances unwilling — to acknowledge this accomplishment."

Finally, my delegation seriously calls upon the Committee to consider this matter objectively and fairly and to refrain from following various political viewpoints, because we should not disregard the full cooperation provided by Iraq in this regard. We are ready to clarify this for any delegation if it should so require.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.